



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

Going to Hospital



Patient**First**

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Going to Hospital

This guide is designed to help you prepare for your hospital visit.

Your rights and responsibilities

You have the right to health care that is:

- **Respectful**
- **Responsive**
- **Safe**

You also have a duty to treat the hospital, staff, and other patients with respect and provide healthcare staff with information about your health.

You will be asked about:

- you and your family's medical history
- any medicines you are taking
- any bad reactions you may have had to a medicine
- any recent changes to your health
- your dietary needs
- your religious, cultural or language needs
- any help you need to communicate or move around.

Healthcare staff have a responsibility to:

- treat you respectfully
- listen to your concerns
- answer your questions clearly and honestly
- inform and educate you about your condition.



Respect and good communication between staff, patients and carers will help create a positive hospital experience, and a better health outcome



Talking with staff

Tell your healthcare staff if you are having problems understanding the information they provide you. Let them know if you need access to:

- translators or interpreters
- the National Relay Service if you have a hearing or speech condition
- information in alternative formats
- support from patient liaison officers or Aboriginal liaison officers.



You can also appoint a family member or carer to speak on your behalf when you are not well enough to do so.

Family and carer involvement

Family and friends who provide you with ongoing support may also be referred to as your carer. Often they may talk with healthcare staff on your behalf if you are unwell or unable to speak for yourself.

There is help available to support your family member or friend when you are in hospital. Contact Carers WA for support and information on 1300 227 377 and ask to speak with the Hospital Team.

Before your admission

Before being admitted to hospital, you may be asked to attend a pre-admission clinic or a telephone call, where staff will:

- confirm your personal details and any special needs you may have
- ask about your medical history, including if you have had a fall recently
- do any tests that will help the doctors to treat you
- explain what will happen during your hospital stay
- tell you if there is any preparation you need to do before you are admitted, e.g. whether you need to fast, stop a medication, or only eat certain foods before coming to hospital.

This is a good time to ask questions and find out more about what to expect. Some people find it useful to bring a friend or family member, or take notes. There is space at the front and back of this booklet to write notes.

Giving your consent

Your treatment is your **choice**.

Before saying yes to treatment, you need to know all about your treatment options, benefits, risks, and alternatives, so that you can make the right decision for yourself.

You can only give your informed consent (your yes) if you understand:

- your condition
- what treatments can help you
- the benefits and risks of the treatment, medicines, or operation.



Medical staff are there to provide you with information and answer any questions you might have

Remember, speak up if you don't understand.

Choosing Wisely Australia has developed a set of '5 Questions' to ask your doctor or health care provider before you get any test, treatment or procedure.

Some tests, treatments and procedures provide little benefit. And in some cases, they may even cause harm.

Use the following five questions to make sure you end up with the right amount of care – not too much and not too little.

More information on the questions listed below is available from: www.choosingwisely.org.au

- Do I really need this test or procedure?
- What are the risks?
- Are there simpler, safer options?
- What happens if I don't do anything?
- What are the costs?

You also have the right to ask for a second opinion from another doctor or specialist.

Your doctor can advise you on treatment options, but only **you** know your:

- lifestyle
- work and family demands
- personal needs.

If you are not sure, discuss your options with a friend or family member.

The final decision is yours. When you are happy that you understand and agree to what is going to happen, you will also need to sign a consent form.

Sometimes trainee or research staff may be involved in your care. This is important to build and improve the health system. Although, you have the right to refuse to take part in the training of healthcare staff or in medical research.

What to bring and prepare

- your Medicare card
- things you use every day, e.g. glasses, dentures
- regular medicines in their original containers (including over-the-counter medicines, inhalers and eye drops)
- mobility aids, if you use any (e.g. wheelchair, walking stick/frame)
- X-rays or scans related to your hospital treatment
- your private health insurance details
- footwear/slippers
- sleepwear and toiletries for overnight stays
- books, magazines, or other items for entertainment.

Don't bring large amounts of cash, jewellery or valuables with you.

Other preparations

- Check with the hospital for any specific items you need to bring if you are a maternity patient.
- If you are in a caring role at home, plan for someone to do that role while you are in hospital. Ask if they can assist in that role when you first return home.
- If you have a person that cares for you at home, have them come with you to your hospital admission. Your carer should also visit often while you are in hospital, so they can be involved in your care needs and treatment decisions.
- If you are a smoker, consider giving up before your hospital stay – not smoking is better for your health. There is a no smoking policy in all hospitals and hospital grounds.

Getting there

Think about how you will get to and from the hospital. If possible:

- do not drive yourself
- consider booking a taxi, or getting a lift with a friend or relative
- get to know the hospital's parking areas and closest set down and pick up points.

If you are travelling away from your home town for treatment, ask your local health service for a copy of [My Travelling Book](#):¹ *Your guide to travelling away from home for medical treatment.*

Patient travel

If you live in the country and need to travel to another town, region or to Perth for medical treatment, you may be eligible for travel assistance through the [Patient Assisted Travel Scheme](#)² (PATS).

Talk to your referring GP or your local PATS office before planning your travel.

Country Health Connection (Meet-and-Assist service)

If you are an Aboriginal PATS patient staying at the Perth Aboriginal Hostels, Country Health Connect can provide transport for you. You can make bookings through your local PATS office.

1 http://www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/fileadmin/sections/pats/Documents/Travelling_Booklet_A5_8pp_HR.pdf

2 <http://www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/index.php?id=pats>

Your health record and privacy

Your health records tell the story of your health care. Every time you visit a doctor or hospital, a record of your visit is created. These records can be accessed quickly in an emergency and by other doctors and hospitals if needed.

The record keeps track of what illnesses and conditions you may have, and any treatments and care you have received. By law, your medical records must be kept confidential.

You have a right to:

- know what has been written in your record
- access the information
- request that mistakes in the records are noted as mistakes.

To get a copy of your health record, write a letter to the hospital that you attended or contact Freedom of Information via <https://www.oic.wa.gov.au/en-au/ContactUs>

WA Health is allowed to access and keep certain information by law in the following cases:

- a diagnosis of cancer
- a diagnosis of mental illness
- birth details
- a diagnosis of a notifiable infectious disease
- assisted reproductive procedures.

This information is coded to protect your identity, and is only used for research, planning, or service improvement.

Endorsements



HEALTH CONSUMERS'
COUNCIL
YOUR VOICE ON HEALTH



Carers WA
Australia



This document can be made available
in alternative formats on request for
a person with disability.

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